

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES FIRST ROUND OF *MORE AT FOUR* GRANTS

RALEIGH— Gov. Mike Easley today announced the first round of *More at Four* pre-kindergarten grant recipients – enabling more than 800 at-risk four year olds to begin enrolling in quality pre-kindergarten classes in January.

“North Carolina is taking the steps necessary to close the achievement gap in education that has been tolerated in this state for far too long,” Easley. “The nation’s top leaders in early childhood education have said that pre-kindergarten programs like *More at Four* and class size reduction efforts are proven ways to give students the tools they need to succeed in school. Better prepared students are more likely to stay in school, stay out of trouble, graduate and go to college.”

The *More at Four* pre-kindergarten program proposed by Easley and funded at \$6.5 million for this year by the North Carolina General Assembly is a community-based, voluntary pre-kindergarten initiative designed to prepare at-risk four-year-olds in North Carolina for success in school. In its first year, *More at Four* funds will be awarded to local communities for high quality pre-K programs that build on existing early childhood services, including public schools, community-based child care centers and preschools, and Head Start programs. *More at Four* classrooms will offer a research-based, education-focused curriculum with qualified teachers and no more than a 9 to 1 student to teacher ratio.

The first round of community applications were reviewed and selected based on the quality of the proposed *More at Four* programs. Communities selected represent the economic and geographic diversity of North Carolina.

Applications for a second round will be accepted until January 25, 2002. Approximately 1,500 children will be enrolled in *More at Four* once both rounds are completed.

“This program will take us a step closer to building one North Carolina where every child has the opportunity to learn in every classroom in every county in this state,” said Easley. “Continued investments in our educational system will pay off in the long run by attracting high quality companies and bring good jobs to North Carolina. Education is the key to successful economic development.”

For more information about the *More at Four* pre-kindergarten program, log onto the Governor’s Office web site at www.governor.state.nc.us.

The list of grant recipients is attached.

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